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An American OMG?
The Air Assault Division Employed As An
Operational Maneuver Group

A Monograph
by

Major Robert H. Drumm Jr.
Aviation

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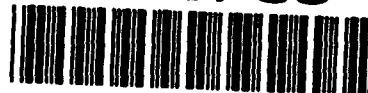
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ABSTRACT

AN AMERICAN DMG? - THE AIR ASSAULT DIVISION EMPLOYED AS AN OPERATIONAL MANEUVER GROUP by MAJ Robert H. Drumm, Jr., USA, 64 pages.

This monograph discusses the air assault division's ability to be employed in the same manner as a Soviet style tank division Operational Maneuver Group (DMG). Since the 1930's, Soviet Army doctrine for operational level warfighting has steadily evolved. Lessons learned from Tukhachevsky and other early 20th Century theorists led to a doctrine designed to counter NATO, and culminated with the introduction of the DMG in 1980. The DMG is a tactical organization designed to secure operational objectives that support strategic goals. This monograph seeks to answer whether or not the U.S. Army can employ the air assault division in the same manner? Given the smaller size of future mechanized and armor forces, the air assault division may be the only type of unit in the Army that can conduct decisive operational maneuver.

The monograph begins with an overview of the evaluation criteria; the Operational Operating Systems (OOSs) described in Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 11-9, Blueprint of the Battlefield. The OOSs include: operational movement and maneuver, fires, protection, command and control, intelligence, and support. Next, the DMG is traced throughout its origin in Soviet doctrine with emphasis on its application in operational maneuver. Then, the U.S. Army's air assault division's evolution, capabilities, and limitations are analyzed with its role as an operational level maneuver force serving as the focal point. Finally, the DMG and air assault division are compared to the OOSs to assess each organization's ability to conduct operational level missions.

The result of the analysis was a determination that the air assault division will require significant augmentation in operational fires, protection, and intelligence to be successfully employed in the same manner as the DMG. Most importantly, the air assault division will require operational commanders who know how to maximize the division's strengths, minimize its weaknesses, and integrate the division into the campaign plan.

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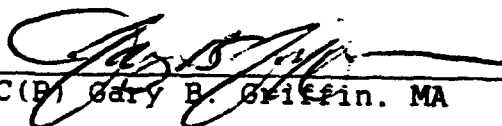
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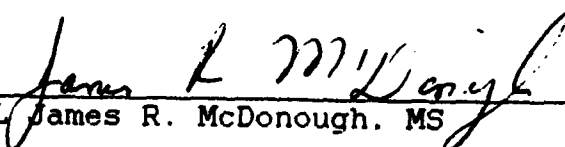
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Table of Contents

	Page
I. Introduction	1
II. Methodology	5
III. The Operational Maneuver Group (OMG).....	11
IV. The Air Assault Division.....	22
V. Comparison and Contrast.....	31
VI. Conclusion	43
VII. Appendix 1 (Soviet Tank Division).....	46
VIII. Appendix 2 (Air Assault Division).....	47
IX. Appendix 3 (Summary Comparison by OOS).....	48
Endnotes	49
Bibliography	60

PART I: INTRODUCTION

The Soviet Army has developed operational level warfighting since the early 1930s. An accumulation of lessons learned from Tukhachevsky, Triandafillov, and other Soviet theorists in the 1920s ultimately led to a doctrine designed to counter the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the 1970s. This doctrine culminated in the introduction of the Operational Maneuver Group (OMG) of the 1980's. The OMG was not a new organization within the Soviet Army. In fact, its roots emerged from an intense study of the Russian Army of World War I and the Red Army of the Soviet Civil War.

Military thinking in the Soviet Union was "energized" by a select group of intellectuals whose focus was on maneuver warfare¹. Their mission was to solve the riddle of World War I's positional warfare with its tactical stalemate and lack of operational successes². During the 1920's, theorists such as Tukhachevsky and A.A. Svechin rejected the traditional single battle of annihilation in favor of a new approach that focused on the need for successive operations that lay between "traditional strategy and tactics, the realm that would become operational art."³ For the Soviets, the cornerstone of this new approach was the deep strike.

By the 1930s the Soviets had successfully combined technology and theory to form the concept of deep operations. From 1943 to 1945 Soviet deep operations "matured" into operational maneuver as success against

the Germans confirmed their operational concepts (the belief that operational success would lead to strategic success, regardless of tactical failures)⁴. The post World War II and Cold War years witnessed Soviet doctrine evolving based on the introduction of nuclear weapons and the threat posed by NATO. Regardless, the deep strike remained a key element of Soviet doctrine in the post war era.

By the early 1970s the Soviets determined that the most effective means of countering NATO was through operational maneuver.⁵ The Soviets refined and fully developed these concepts by 1980.⁶ The OMG, "a resurrected and expanded version of the World War II Red Army Mobile Group," first appeared in 1982 in Polish military publications.⁷ Major Wojciech Michalak used the term "Operational Marching Groups" and later "Operational Maneuver Groups" to describe raiding detachments that could be used to maneuver forces deep on the modern battlefield.⁸ In contrast to the Soviet's years of operational level doctrinal development, formal United States Army operational doctrine has evolved only since it first appeared in the 1982 version of FM 100-5,⁹ "Operations."

From the end of World War II and continuing through the Cold War and the NATO alliance years of the 1960s, Army doctrine focused on two critical events. At the strategic level, Army doctrine concentrated on the

deployment of forces to reinforce Germany (10 in 10). Simultaneously, the Army focused narrowly on the tactical fight in the Fulda Gap.

Army training and doctrine in 1973 centered on the active defense. This distinctly European/NATO orientation was designed to maintain the NATO requirements of "Flexible Response and Forward Defense." The 1976 edition of FM 100-5, "Operations," supported the concept and focused on "winning the first battle." The focal point of our warfighting doctrine during the period was distinctly tactical.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Army doctrine began to evolve from deep battle into the current concept of AirLand Battle. Fortunately, the five years between 1977 and 1981 saw a shift in doctrine from the division and tactics to the corps where close, deep, and rear battles would be fought as an operational whole. This evolution in Army doctrine, with the recognition that the Army was in need of doctrine for corps and echelons above corps, was the beginning of contemporary American operational art.

The 1981 version of FM 100-5 brought the Army into the AirLand Battle era. AirLand Battle doctrine required commanders to base their tactical plans on an "operational plan to bring about success in a theater." It wasn't until 1981 that the U.S. Army concluded what the Soviets had known since the 1920's--that strategic success is linked to tactics at the operational level of

war. With this recognition, the 1986 version of FM 100-5 continued to integrate the operational level of warfare into formal doctrine. Subsequent publications, such as IRADOC PAM 11-9, further demonstrated the Army's dedication to bridging strategy and tactics through¹⁴ operational warfighting. The 1992 version of FM 100-5 will undoubtedly maintain the U.S. Army's investment in the continued development of doctrine which includes (just as the Soviets have done for years) the operational level of war.

With the U.S.-Soviet compatibility in thinking, if the Soviets use the OMG to secure operational objectives which support their strategic aims; what organization can the U.S. Army employ to best achieve the same result?

One option available to the operational level planner is the air assault division. In that regard, this monograph seeks to answer the question: Can the air assault division be utilized in the same manner as the Operational Maneuver Group (OMG)?

To answer the question this paper is divided into four major sections. First, the evaluation criteria. As the principal means of analysis the Operational Operating Systems (OOS), outlined in IRADOC Pam 11-9, "Blueprint of the Battlefield," will be defined. The second section will trace the evolution of the Soviet OMG. The third section will examine the air assault division's capabilities and limitations as an operational level maneuver force. Finally, the fourth section compares and

contrasts the DMG with the air assault division using the OOS as the basis of comparison. Nevertheless, to determine if the air assault division can be utilized in the same manner as the Operational Maneuver Group, it is first necessary to review the six Operational Operating Systems (OOS).

PART II: METHODOLOGY

TRADOC Pam 11-9, "Blueprint of the Battlefield," serves as the evaluation criteria for the comparison of the DMG and the air assault division. The Blueprint is the Army's tool for providing a basis for "describing Army requirements, capabilities, and combat activities at the three levels of war." The basis of this analysis is its definition of the operational level of war:

the level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters of operations. 16

Each level of war in the Blueprint is organized by operating systems. The Operational Operating System(s) (OOS) are defined as, "the major functions performed by joint and combined operational forces for successfully executing campaigns and major operations in a theater or area of operations." The six OOS are; movement and maneuver, fires, protection, command and control, intelligence, and support.

Operational movement and maneuver describes the employment of forces to achieve either a positional advantage before a battle or exploiting a tactical

19
situation to achieve an operational or strategic success.
It involves positioning the needed forces and resources
20
"at the critical time and place." The key is the
strategic aim, "not the size, echelon or type of the
21
formation involved." This dynamic element of combat
power enables a commander to concentrate his force at the
critical point to defeat a larger force through the use
22
of surprise, shock and momentum. This OOS includes the
functions of providing for one's own mobility while
countering the enemy's mobility and controlling terrain
23
for positional advantage. Operational movement and
maneuver, especially during deep operations, insures the
commander has the force at the right place and at the
right time to execute his campaign plan.

Operational fires is not "just fire support." The
first, and one of the major reasons why, is that unlike
tactical fire support, operational fires are planned from
the "top down." Operational fires are the complete
integration of joint and combined firepower to achieve a
24
decisive impact. Operational fires are not tactical fire
support because operational maneuver is not necessarily
dependent on those fires. But, as the range of tactical
fire support systems increases, they will play an
25
increasing role in the delivery of operational fires.

In particular, operational fires include the
allocation of joint and combined air, land, sea, and
space assets to achieve a single operationally

significant objective. As IRADOC Pam 11-9 states, "They have major and possibly decisive implications for campaigns or major operations." Operational fires concentrate on one or more of three important tasks: "...facilitating maneuver, isolating the battlefield, and destroying critical functions and facilities." Operational fires give the commander the ability to strike deep in support of his campaign plan.

Operational protection centers on the conservation of the combat potential of a force, which facilitates its application at the decisive place and time. It applies the old saying, "if it can be seen, it can be hit," to the operational level by making soldiers, systems, and operational formations difficult for the enemy to locate, strike, and thus destroy. In particular, operational protection includes the following major elements; air defense, employing operations security measures (OPSEC), and conducting operational level deception operations.

Operational air defense systems provide protection from enemy air attack through aggressive defense and destruction of the enemy's air attack capability in the air. This joint and combined endeavor integrates aircraft, missile, air defense artillery, and electronic warfare capabilities to counter concentrated enemy air assets.

FM 100-7, "The Army in Theater Operations," defines operational deception as, "those operations which purposely mislead enemy decision makers by distortion,

concealment, and falsification of indicators of friendly intentions, capabilities, or dispositions." It includes protecting the commander's own intentions by disseminating misinformation to deceive the enemy as well as determining the effects of the deception campaign. For the commander, operational protection preserves the force and provides the combat power to execute the campaign plan.

Command and Control (C2) is defined as, "the exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned operational forces in the accomplishment of the mission." EM 100-7 describes it as the, "glue that binds the other operational elements together, providing a synergistic effect." Command and control at the operational level includes units of different sizes and capabilities. As a result, longer lead times are required for passing mission orders and plans. Coordination will also take longer based on the increased span of control and the inherently joint and combined nature of operational level actions. The key ingredient in the C2 process is the ability of the commander to impart his "vision" to his subordinate commanders. It fixes responsibilities and, more than anything else, allows the operational commander to "empower subordinates with freedom of action." For the commander, operational command and control allows the synchronization of the other operating systems - especially when executing deep missions in support of the

campaign plan.

Operational intelligence is that intelligence
"required for the planning and conduct of campaigns and
major operations within a theater (or area) of
operations." ³⁶ This critical capability will access the
resources of joint and combined intelligence systems to
collect information, analyze it, and disseminate the
synthesized intelligence in a timely manner. ³⁷ Given the
long lead time required for joint and combined
operations, as discussed in C2, the timeliness and
accuracy of the information is of paramount importance.
The operational intelligence systems concentrate on the
"collection, identification, location, and analysis of
strategic and operational centers of gravity." ³⁸ These
centers of gravity, if successfully attacked, will
achieve assigned operational objectives. ³⁹

Intelligence at the operational level is broader
than that normally experienced at the tactical level with
the Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB).
Many elements of the IPB apply at the operational level,
but they must be assessed in a "wider strategic context"
to impact the decision making process of major operations
and campaigns. ⁴⁰ Operational intelligence requires access
to sources usually only attainable through strategic
collection means. These sources provide information on
political, economic, social, and technological factors
that influence the enemy commander's decision making
process. ⁴¹ For deep operations within a campaign, the key

to success or failure will rest on the accuracy and timeliness of operational intelligence.

Operational support is defined in FM 100-7 as, "those logistical and other support activities required to sustain the force in campaigns and major operations within a theater or operational area." One of the major differences between tactical combat service support (CSS) and operational level support is the longer planning and preparation time required to support the more complex and expansive operations. Operational support continues the thread that carries through CSS operations, namely; operational support extends from the theater of operations sustainment base to the forward CSS units organic to tactical formations. Operational support truly provides the linkage between strategic support and tactical combat service support.

The key element in operational support is the ability of the operational level planner to anticipate requirements at the operational depth--in particular, during exploitation and pursuit. If he fails, the campaign could reach its culminating point before reaching its operational objective due to the lack of required support.

As mentioned earlier, these Operational Operating Systems (OOS) serve as the evaluation criteria for determining if the air assault division can be used in the same manner as the OMG. To begin the analysis, it is necessary to examine the evolution of the OMG.

PART III: THE OPERATIONAL MANEUVER GROUP (OMG)

Like the origins of most Soviet doctrine, the origins of the Operational Maneuver Group (OMG) are found deep within the depths of Soviet military history. C.N.Donnelly's 1982 International Defense Review article, "The Soviet Operational Manoeuver Group, A New Challenge for NATO," provides a synopsis of the importance of Soviet history to their doctrine. He wrote, "Soviet doctrine is on the whole, evolutionary and leans heavily on historical operational analysis for the evaluation and reevaluation of principles and operational models."⁴⁶

The Soviet evolution of the operational level of war emerged as a result of their analysis of warfare during their experience in World War I and the Russian Civil War. As V.G. Reznichenko wrote in the 1966 version of Iaktika, "...the operational art was a logical consequence of change in the character of armed struggle, reflecting the appearance of its new phenomenon--⁴⁷ operations." But where did the OMG originate and how does this tactical force provide strategic linkage through the application of operational maneuver? Its roots go back to the days of the Russian Civil War and⁴⁸ the Red Army.

The Russian Civil War stood in sharp contrast to the war fought on the Western Front. The Russian Civil War was fought utilizing small forces over vast areas with few heavy weapons. More importantly, the Civil War produced a generation of ex-Russian Imperial Army

49

officers trained and experienced in maneuver warfare. During this period, the Soviets realized that tactical operations did not guarantee strategic success and that a new intermediate level of warfare was required - they⁵⁰ called it "operativnoe iskusstvo" (operational art).

M.N. Tukachevsky drew upon his experiences on the Vistula in 1920 and concluded, "the impossibility of a modern wide front of destroying the enemy army by one blow forces the achievement of that end by a series of successive blows." S.S. Kamenev, commander of the Red Army from 1919-1924, additionally rejected the idea of the one great "strategic stroke." He wrote, "the uninterrupted conduct of operations is the main⁵¹ condition for victory." In 1927, A.A. Svechin wrote his definition of operational art in Strategy:

Normally the path to final aims is broken up into a series of operations, subdivided in time, by more or less sizeable pauses, comprising differing territorial sections of a theater of war and differing sharply as a consequence of different intermediate aims. 52

By the mid-1920s, Tukachevsky's writings reflected not only the requirement for successive operations, but⁵³ also the need to defeat the enemy at a great depth. V.K. Triandafillov echoed the need for depth in his 1929 work, The Character of Operations of Modern Armies, by concluding that, "only successive operations over a month's time to a depth of 150 to 200 kilometers could⁵⁴ produce victories." Of particular note was

Triandafillov's concept of combined operations with tanks and air forces to penetrate enemy defenses and extend the offense to operational depths.⁵⁵

These Soviet theorists were the influence behind the 1929 Soviet Field Regulation that institutionalized deep battle by combined arms use of tanks, infantry,⁵⁶ artillery and aviation. This doctrine emerged at the same time (1929-1936) Soviet industry began producing mechanized and armored forces required by the Red Army to conduct operational maneuver.⁵⁷ By 1935, the theory of deep battle to operational depths of 50 - 100 kilometers was the norm. The Field Regulation of 1936 made deep battle and deep operations "tenets of Soviet Military Art." Tank brigades and tank corps served as "mobile groups" designed to exploit offensive success at operational depths.⁵⁸ The 1936 regulation, authored by Tukachevsky and A.I. Egorov, defined deep operations to include, "the violent development of tactical success into operational success with the aim of the complete encirclement and destruction of the enemy."⁵⁹

By 1936 the Soviet Army had an operational level doctrine and four mechanized corps of almost 600 tanks; each with a complement of mechanized and tank brigades, regiments and battalions ready for employment at the tactical and operational level.⁶⁰ Unfortunately, Stalin reversed the trend of operational thinking and design by eliminating most of the Army's senior leaders and leading theorists.

Stalin's purge of 1937-1938 eliminated Tukhachevsky, Egorov, Kamenov, Svechin and many others. Moreover, any senior officer who survived distanced himself from their
61 ideas. Stalin's purges could not have come at a worse time for the evolution of operational doctrine in the Soviet Army was at a critical juncture. This crossroads in Soviet military history was between the industrial base that provided the mechanized equipment and the Soviet leadership that provided the theory to institutionalize the operational maneuver concept. But, just at the moment the two were to come together and be refined, the aggressive leadership necessary to make the required adjustments in operational execution were eliminated from the system. The adjustments were now considered doctrinal failures. The set-backs suffered by large tank forces in Spain (1937-38) and the Soviet Army's difficulty employing large formations of mechanized forces in eastern Poland in September 1939
62 resulted in the elimination of the large corps. The tank corps were then replaced with smaller motorized divisions and a shift in doctrine favoring smaller and more easily controllable formations followed. The Soviet Army was to rethink that decision after observing the fall of
63 France in 1940.

The Soviet's keenly watched the collapse of the French in 1940 and in light of the catastrophe attempted to rebuild their large tank corps in accordance with
64 Tukachevsky's plan. The effect of the Stalin purges and

the lack of trained "operational level" commanders in the Army resulted in disaster. During the early part of war in 1941, Soviet mechanized corps were identified to conduct operational maneuver at both the front and army level. The Germans, on the other hand, were able to maximize surprise and overwhelm the partially prepared Soviet defenses for quick successes. Although the Germans easily destroyed the Soviet armored forces and the Soviets' own inability to command and control the large mechanized formations proved them to be ineffective, the concept of the mobile group remained valid.⁶⁵

While the Germans continued to concentrate on the "tactical versatility" of the Eastern Front, the Soviet Army regrouped and reoriented their plans to make the operational level the key to success. Operation Uranus,⁶⁶ the November 1942 Stalingrad counteroffensive, marked the first major Soviet offensive operation of the war. During this operation, the Soviet Army successfully penetrated the German lines, committed mobile corps to exploitation, conducted link-up operations, and encircled the Germans within the city.⁶⁷

The Stalingrad counteroffensive (November 1942) marked a reemergence in Soviet operational warfighting application. Dr. Jacob Kipp of the Foreign Military Studies Office summarized the turn of events in his 1987 article, "Conventional Force Modernization and the Asymmetries of Military Doctrine: Historical Reflections

on AirLand Battle and the Operational Maneuver Group."

Dr. Kipp wrote, "German tactical successes, which could be found until very late in the fighting, drowned in a sea of operational disasters." The front soon emerged as the primary operational level organization. Along the same lines, David Glantz's 1985 article in Parameters, entitled "The Nature of Soviet Operational Art," details a 1945 article by LTG Zlobin. LTG Zlobin described front operations as, "a series of army operations executed either simultaneously or successively and emphasized the deep aspects of operations."

The Soviets followed Stalingrad with the introduction of a new Front Mobile Group at Kursk in July, 1943--again with great operational level success. Then, in August 1943, the Soviet's 5th Guards Army and 5th Guards Tank Army, once again under front control, defeated the German LII Army Corps northwest of Belgorod.

In 1944 the Soviet's conducted the largest operational level action of the war to date. Named, "Operation Bagration," the Soviets simultaneously maneuvered four fronts against very deep objectives. The result of "Operation Bagration" was not only the encirclement of 36 German divisions, but Soviet forces on the East Prussian borders of Germany by July 1944. Operational warfighting had thus come full circle in the Soviet military. During the "Great Patriotic War" it was also the decisive level of war.

The reemergence of Soviet operational warfighting

during World War II occurred for two major reasons. First, the reality of war in a country the size of Russia forced the Soviets to adopt a doctrine that combined large formations in the form of corps, armies, and fronts with deep operations.⁷⁴ Second, Stalin allowed it.⁷⁵ The major question in 1945 was: with the reorganization and equipping of the armed forces to conduct operational level warfare, would Stalin allow it to continue - especially after the three coup attempts between 1930 -⁷⁶ 1932?

Stalin's death in 1953 provided the answer and the opportunity for historians to seriously study the causes of Soviet operational level success.⁷⁷ Additionally, his death created a new debate among the military which resulted in the creation of a new dimension of warfare. Glantz referred to it as a "revolution in military affairs." This revolution centered around the idea that the next war could be nuclear.⁷⁸ This contrasted with 1953 Soviet operational art which was characterized by two major tenets. First, operational art was "interconnected and interrelated with the other components" of military art--strategy and tactics. Second, operational art served to coordinate and execute army and front⁷⁹ operations.

From 1954-1958 Minister of Defense Marshall Zhukov⁸⁰ led a reassessment in Soviet military doctrine. The term "mobile group," which drew its legacy from the Civil War,

was dropped by Zhukov in 1956 because in essence⁸¹
everything was now mobile. The revolution deemphasized
conventional operational functions and emphasized⁸²
strategic nuclear concepts. Zhukov based his reforms on
the premise that nuclear weapons made large Soviet
formations too lucrative a target and too cumbersome to
survive on the nuclear battlefield. Zhukov believed that
Soviet forces had to be highly maneuverable to reduce⁸³
their vulnerability to NATO.

After 1960 there were no forces assigned the
specific task of operational maneuver. Instead, the
Soviet Army of the 1960s was designed to "clean-up" the
nuclear battlefield.⁸⁴ A reflection of this thinking was
Zhukov's creation of streamlined motorized rifle
divisions, smaller tank armies composed only of tanks,
and the Combined Arms Army (CAA) - a mixture of motorized⁸⁵
rifle divisions and tank divisions. With this
restructuring, the modern Soviet Army was born.

Nuclear weapons predominated Soviet thought and
doctrine in the early 1960's. The creation of the
"Strategic Rocket Forces," instead of "Operational Rocket
Forces," demonstrated the shift in Soviet emphasis to the
strategic level. However, by the mid-1960s, operational
art began to reemerge as theorists sought ways to
interject Tukachevsky's deep operations concepts and⁸⁶
ideas into the environment of the nuclear battlefield.
As Y. Novikoc F. Sverdlov described operational maneuver
in his 1967 book, Maneuver in Modern Land Warfare:

It [operational maneuver] may take the form of maneuver with nuclear strikes delivered by operational or tactical missiles or the air force, [or] a maneuver by operational groups from one sector to another to exploit success or outflank an enemy group on the defensive, etc. 87

By the early 1970's, operational art reappeared. It served to temper or balance the single sided nuclear philosophy. Evidence of this trend is in Soviet military literature of the period modifying the description of total nuclear war with phrases such as, "however, we 88 recognize the possibility of conventional operations." Even the new, smaller-sized motorized rifle and tank forces were thrust into the realm of operational maneuver with statements that they, "can perform very complicated combat tasks with decisive arms, at great depth and at 89 high tempo."

It is clear that in the late 1970s, and into the early 1980s, the Soviets had reoriented their thinking with the focus on future war being conventional under the 90 threat of nuclear conditions. Nevertheless, C.N. Donnelly's 1982 article highlights that the reader should not underestimate the influence of World War II tank formations on the evolving Soviet doctrine. In fact, the tank commanders of World War II were now occupying senior 91 positions within the Soviet ground forces. By 1976, the Soviets envisioned the first battle of the next war as a series of "meeting engagements" involving combined arms armies which would "penetrate, outflank, and envelop 92 enemy forces."

By the mid-1980s, the Soviets believed that advances in conventional weapons technology made the battlefield as deadly and complex as the nuclear battlefield. The problem for the Soviet planner now was how to use the advances in technology to rapidly penetrate NATO's defenses and either destroy NATO's nuclear delivery means, or get so deep into NATO's rear that the use of nuclear weapons would be impossible. The answer was once again in history - the Mobile Group. The Mobile Group was not a fixed organization but a concept that was employed to exploit the vulnerabilities of the enemy. As C.N. Donnelly wrote, it gave the operational commander "genuine flexibility." In the 1980's the Mobile Group was reorganized as the Operational Maneuver Group (OMG). D.L. Smith and A.L. Meier's 1987 International Defense Review article identified the missions of the OMG:

These formations, with their organic airpower, would carry the battle deep into the enemy's rear to destroy nuclear assets and air defense sites; seize command and control systems, airfields, key bridges and railroad junctions; create chaos and disorder; and limit the freedom of maneuver of enemy operational reserves.

The OMG gave the commander the same capability to conduct exploitation and pursuit, as it had done in 1945, but the key in 1980 was the OMG's strategic linkage through the application of operational maneuver. As Gregory Grist wrote in his 1989 Armor article, "At the most fundamental level, the purpose of the OMG is to ensure the rapid and total collapse of NATO's defenses before NATO can execute the tactical nuclear option."

Donnelly believed that the OMG played a much greater role in the 1980s than the mobile group in World War II due to the:

decreased scale of modern operations in terms of overall numbers of men, the increased importance of speed and a high rate of advance, the certainty of strategic disaster in event of operational failure, and the particular nature of NATO defenses. 97

The OMG created shock waves throughout NATO because it demonstrated that conceptually the Soviets had the ability to use conventional forces "in a decisive manner 98 at the operational level." The OMG concept is manifest in the creation of a unit tailored from operational forces at the front or army level to assist in accomplishing 99 operational missions. The OMG is a concept, but that concept uses a standard base to build a force structure for operational actions.

The OMG of an army is usually a reinforced tank division supported by an "air assault brigade, a helicopter regiment, an army artillery group, reconnaissance and intelligence units, air defense units, engineer units, command and control elements, and a 100 number of fixed-wing aircraft" (A diagram of a Soviet 101 tank division is at Appendix 1). As the size of the organization increases so does its OMG (the OMG for a 102 front is usually a tank army).

The Soviets believed their operational concepts could bring them victory in a conventional strategic 103 offensive against a "nuclear-armed " NATO. It must be

remembered, however, that their operational formations, in particular the OMG, were not revolutionary but evolutionary creations. As David Glantz wrote in his 1983 Military Review article entitled, "Soviet Operational Formation for Battle: A Perspective," "In a sense, it [the OMG] represents a full maturation of the concepts Tukachevsky espoused when he defined deep battle
104
in 1936."

PART IV: THE AIR ASSAULT DIVISION

Is there a U.S. Army equivalent to the Soviet tank division OMG that is capable of conducting operational maneuver? The answer may be the air assault division.

General John W. Foss, the commander of Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), wrote in 1990, "Army Aviation is a key link in the evolutionary change in warfare. Aviation has redefined mobility and firepower on the
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battlefield." The 101st Airborne Division (Assault) combines mobility and firepower to provide the Army a rapidly deployable force, fully capable of linking strategic objectives with tactical action through operational maneuver.

Air assault at the operational level of war is not simply the systematic movement of combat troops. Briley Howell's 1988 individual study project at the Army War College entitled, "Air Assault - Rapid Response at the Operational Level," noted that the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) provides the U.S. Army a great capability at the operational level. But, as he noted:

At the operational level of war, the air assault tactical concept cannot be successfully employed by loading untrained infantry soldiers on helicopters and flying them off to battle. 106

Rather, air assault doctrine is best defined as a precision combat operation that allows forces to attack and defeat an enemy quickly throughout the entire depth of the battlefield and where he is determined to be the 107 weakest. The air assault division is by no means a contemporary innovation. In fact, its conceptual origin can be traced back as far as World War I with the introduction of the "vertical dimension" to the 108 battlefield.

American air power theorist General Billy Mitchell can be credited as the father of air assault. In October 1918, Mitchell was assigned the task of capturing the city of Metz, a German strongpoint. He proposed a joint operation that integrated ground troops parachuted behind German lines, troop lift planes, fighter aircraft and resupply aircraft. Unfortunately, the war ended before the mission could be executed. However, his theoretical point was made--it was possible to plan for and support the integration of ground and air assets in significant 109 numbers to "vertically envelope" a tactical objective.

Technology and theory never combined to fully develop the concept of aerial envelopment during the inter-war period. The preeminent doctrinal concept was associated with the idea of mechanization, which was under the theoretical leadership of B.H. Liddell Hart,

J.F.C. Fuller, and Heinz Guderian. Their efforts to combine combat power with the potential of rapid movement evolved slowly. Their driving ambition was to seek a means of recapturing the maneuverability that was lost on the battlefields of the Great War. Unfortunately, only one army had the foresight to put potential into production--the Wehrmacht. The effect of the German Army's rearming under the vision of Adolf Hitler resulted in Blitzkrieg--a doctrine that changed the face of modern warfare.
110

During World War II the Luftwaffe's airborne and air transported or "landing" troops were a fundamental component of Blitzkrieg. Len Deighton's book, Blitzkrieg, describes Goering's 22nd Air Landing Division:

Often described as airborne troops, these were, in fact, about 12,000 infantrymen who had been shown how to pack themselves and their equipment into transport aircraft and get out quickly once the aircraft were on the ground. 111

The air landing division concept, a World War II version of the modern day air assault division, was modified by the Americans in favor of the British airborne concept. The British determined that enemy held airfields and landing areas would be too heavily fortified for landing air transports. Therefore, a combination of parachute and glider units was recommended.
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The U.S. Army developed its airborne doctrine in 1940 and organized its first two airborne divisions in

1942. The 82nd and 101st Airborne were designed with one parachute and two glider regiments as well as their
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compliment of artillery and support units. Throughout the war and into the Korean conflict the Army continued to refine the doctrine for the employment of these divisions and their supporting units. In particular, the glider regiments were converted to parachute regiments
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during the inter-war years. The divisions showed tremendous potential for mass movement, but their inherent lack of operational and tactical mobility proved
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to be distinctive disadvantages. General James Gavin, former commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, believed mobility was the critical issue for airborne forces. His 1945 book, Airborne Warfare, concluded that without aerial mobility a stalemate was the most likely result of a limited war. He later wrote in War and Peace in the Space Age that the result of the Korean War might have been different if the Army had realized the
116
potential of the helicopter. In 1954, General Gavin's Armor magazine article suggested the Army look toward aviation as a means of overcoming the airborne's lack of mobility. The general argued that the air systems then under development could provide the "mobility, firepower, and shock effect" that if properly organized, would have
117
a "predominant influence on future warfare."

By 1962, the U.S. Army Tactical Mobility Requirements Board, known as the Howze Board, was the starting point for a process that would eventually result

in the formation of the air assault division. By the early 1960's, units such as the 11th Air Assault Division were formed as a direct result of Howze Board
118
recommendations.

The 11th Air Assault Division was redesignated the 1st Cavalry Division (Air Mobile) in 1965 and deployed to Vietnam the same year. In 1967 the 101st Airborne Division deployed to Vietnam from its base at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky. In 1968 the division was designated as the Army's second air mobile division. It returned from the conflict in 1972 and was redesignated as the U.S. Army's only air assault division in 1974: the 101st
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Airborne Division (Air Assault).

Although techniques and procedures have been modified to account for improvements in technology and evolutionary changes in U.S. Army doctrine, many of the concepts developed in Vietnam remain valid for the air
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assault division today. The air assault division is usually assigned to a corps where its mobility permits its use in performing a variety of tactical and
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operational missions.

The division has the capability to execute numerous
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missions rapidly over a distance of up to 150 kilometers. In a corps deliberate attack for example, the division is ideally suited for an economy of force mission or the
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seizure of key terrain for subsequent linkup operations. The rapid mobility of the air assault division also makes it the preferred force for attacking to seize and

establish bridgeheads and airheads.

The 101st Airborne Division's 1988 operations manual perhaps best defines the operational role of the division: "When the division fights as part of a corps or JTF, the higher commander employs the air assault division at a critical point and place in time to cause a decisive impact on his campaign plan." This definition is key to the main point of this study because of the striking similarity between this role of the air assault division and the main role of the OMG provided by Glantz's 1983 Military Review article. He identified the OMG's role as:

This entire operational formation reflects a desire of the Soviets to commit forces to combat on a carefully timed basis to facilitate rapid penetration and steady buildup in the power of the offensive thrust (narashchivania) sufficient to carry it successfully to operational depths. 126

To accomplish this "decisive attack" mission and the wide range of other potential missions it may be called upon to perform, the air assault division is organized into three air assault infantry brigades. Each brigade contains three infantry battalions. The Division Artillery (DIVARTY) is composed of three field artillery battalions of 105mm howitzers and a Target Acquisition Battery (TAB). The Division Support Command (DISCOM) provides logistics and maintenance support to the division. Additionally, the division maintains the usual complement of signal, engineer, intelligence,

Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC), and Military Police (MP) assets. "Tailored" for air assault operations, these support forces have less heavy equipment than their standard mechanized or armored division counterparts. But, unlike the Army's other "light" divisions, the greatest difference, and the capability which allows the division to perform tactical and operational level missions, is the mobility inherent¹²⁷ in the division's aviation brigade.

The 101st Aviation Brigade is composed of eight battalions. The brigade provides the division three assault battalions (UH-60), three attack helicopter battalions (AH-64), one medium lift helicopter battalion¹²⁸ (CH-47), an aviation command battalion. This organization provides sufficient lift assets to conduct a¹²⁹ simultaneous combat assault with one maneuver brigade. Appendix 2 (The Air Assault Division) provides a diagram¹³⁰ of the current air assault division structure.

The employment of the air assault division, especially at the operational level, requires commanders and planners to carefully compare the mission with the division's capabilities. The division's maximum potential comes from its speed and mobility rather than¹³¹ its concentrated firepower. The enemy is forced into a pattern of reaction and is incapable of making an effective "counterconcentration" because the air assault force can concentrate rapidly and move quickly to new¹³² objectives.

Ideally, the division is best employed where there are limited routes of threat advance and lines of communications, where friendly forces enjoy air superiority, and the enemy lacks effective air defense measures.¹³³ The division's "light" infantry, combined with its overwhelming helicopter mobility, makes it particularly well suited for employment in restrictive terrain such as mountains, urban areas and jungles.¹³⁴ In addition, the division's structure gives it the additional capability to sustain operations at an airhead without external support for approximately two days.¹³⁵

In particular, the air assault division can rapidly move to the friendly or enemy's rear area where command and control facilities, logistics centers, and combat support units can be destroyed.¹³⁶ The risk of employing maneuver forces in the enemy's rear area, however, are numerous. William G. Hanne's 1983 Strategic Issues Research Memorandum entitled, "AirLand Battle and the Operational Maneuver Group," weighed the risks of rear area operations with the benefits. Hanne justified rear action when it was directed against high value targets because they, "can produce the window for offensive action critical to defensive success or preserve the initiative for offensive operations."¹³⁷ Regardless, the air assault division must be employed after careful consideration of the factors that maximize the division's advantages of surprise and mobility while minimizing its vulnerabilities.¹³⁸

The helicopter's mobility is its key to survival on the modern battlefield. However, this mobility is offset by a "thin skin" vulnerability not found in armored forces. But contrary to the tank, the helicopter's mobility allows it to rapidly maneuver over "irregular surfaces and natural or man made obstacles."

Additionally, the helicopter can engage multiple targets from multiple directions and defeat enemy tanks equipped with frontal protection of reactive armor. 139

Howell captured the essence of the division's advantage over traditional mechanized and armored forces when he wrote,

In little more than an hour, an air assault unit can fly dispersed for 200 kilometers and then concentrate, deploy, and engage the enemy; a situation which would require ten hours for an armor force moving along one route. 140

Nevertheless, the air assault division was not designed to meet an armor heavy threat in open terrain. Consequently, if the division is operating against a heavily mechanized or armor force, the air assault division's lack of "on ground" mobility could be exploited by a mechanized enemy with disastrous results. 141

In addition to the air assault division's limited ground mobility, other limitations include the need for local air superiority, augmentation for sustained operations, and its reduced effectiveness during bad weather. 142 In offensive scenarios the division should not be employed in highly trafficable terrain where enemy

armor reserves would be highly mobile. For operational level missions, especially deep strikes across the FLOT, air assault forces should seldom be employed during daylight--for it is essential in the interest of survival to maximize the division's night flying and night fighting capabilities. In the defense, terrain becomes the most important consideration. Air assault forces should not be employed on highly mobile avenues of approach unless the division's zone is narrow enough to permit defense in depth. The key to the division's success will be timely and accurate intelligence that allows the use of multiple axis to reduce exposure time and increase survivability.

But can the air assault division go "deep" and provide the AirLand Battle commander with a force capable of executing operational maneuver? Given the employment of the division within the scope of its limitations while maximizing its speed and mobility; the answer is yes! The division's utility at the operational level is in its ability to strike deep targets that support strategic objectives. Given the ability of the air assault division to conduct operational maneuver, can it be employed in the same manner as the Soviet OMG?

PART V: COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

The answer to the air assault division's employment as an OMG is in its ability to maximize advantages and minimize organizational shortcomings as they apply to the

OOS. This section will compare and contrast an army level OMG (in this case a tank division) and the air assault division utilizing the OOS. The intent is not to compare the two divisions with each other, although some comparison is inevitable, but to evaluate the units in accordance with their ability to employ the Operational Operating Systems. In that regard, the first OOS selected is movement and maneuver.

To be successful, an operational level force must be able to move to the theater and maneuver throughout the area of operations. In that light, the OMG must be committed at the critical time and place to conduct operational movement and maneuver. Prior commitment ensures the continued fragmentation of the defense, maintains momentum, and intercepts redeploying or¹⁴⁵ reinforcing forces. To accomplish this task, the OMG takes advantage of its normal position behind the first¹⁴⁶ echelon divisions about 30 to 35 kilometers. From this position it can maximize the effects of army and division first echelon forces that rupture shallow defenses and¹⁴⁷ provide an opportunity for exploitation.

From the Soviet perspective, operational maneuver¹⁴⁸ is conducted at depths of 50 to 300 kilometers. For example, a tank division operating as an army OMG, may maneuver 100 kilometers or more beyond the FLOT versus¹⁴⁹ other army forces. But, operating beyond other forces capable of providing support is a vulnerability if adequate contingencies have not been planned, rehearsed

and executed.

Failure is the "cost" for over extending lines of operation and communications. Two cases, Marshal Pilsudski's counter-offensive at Warsaw and Manstein's attack at Kharkov in 1943, demonstrate the high attrition rates suffered by Soviet forces when they out-ran¹⁵⁰ logistical and air support.

Additionally, the OMG must maintain a high movement rate of 25-40 kilometers per hour. The OMG must travel on roads in order to maintain this speed. If the road network is limited and sufficient routes are not available for flank security elements, the OMG will be vulnerable to small units with "modest" antitank¹⁵¹ capabilities. Additionally, the introduction of the OMG into the battle itself may be a problem. John Hyden's 1987 article in International Defense Review stated,

Perhaps of more fundamental concern, because of the enormous number of vehicles involved, the whole tactical problem of the insertion of the OMGs is in doubt. 152

For the OMG, operational maneuver may be a problem--a problem of just getting into the battle.

The air assault division's advantage in mobility is its greatest asset in conducting operational movement and maneuver. What was developed in Vietnam as "air mobility" has been refined today to provide air assault forces that maximize the helicopter's capability to "out-manuever and surprise" a ground oriented enemy.¹⁵³ The air assault division's speed in developing the attack of

operational objectives, and its ability to rapidly maneuver to shift the orientation of the main effort, provide the greatest disruptive effect on the enemy. If, as FM 100-7 states; surprise, shock, and momentum are trademarks of operational maneuver, then the air assault division fits the description well. Operation Desert Storm provides an excellent example. In two hours the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) moved as far as the heavy divisions moved in a day. At the height of the campaign the division maneuvered freely less than 60 miles from Baghdad. In the process, it blocked Highway Eight, the main route between Kuwait and the Iraqi capital and cut-off fleeing units of the Republican Guards--an operational objective.

In comparison to the Soviet tank division, the air assault division moves and maneuvers at unparalleled speed. But the advantage of the tank division is its ability to conduct operations in adverse weather--a major disadvantage for the air assault division due to its heavy dependence on helicopters. Given adequate weather, especially for night operations, the air assault division is totally capable of conducting operational movement and maneuver and has a clear advantage over the OMG which may have difficulty even getting to the battle.

Although operational maneuver does not "necessarily" depend on operational fires, it is doubtful success can be achieved without it. Operational fires are a distinct advantage for the Soviet OMG. Afterall,

the heart and soul of the Soviet Army is its artillery. A Soviet tank division serving as an army level OMG will be reinforced with artillery assets determined by the
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army commander. These additional assets will reinforce the divisions organic artillery regiment's 2S3 howitzers and BM-21 rocket launchers as well as the Surface to
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Surface Missile Battalion's FROG-7/7B or SS-21 missiles. The Soviets understand the importance of air support for the OMG. But as John Hyden noted in his article, "... the Soviets themselves recognize the advantages of Western technology in this respect, and are, if not
159
pessimistic, at least uncertain of success." But overall, the combined assets of dedicated army level artillery and close air support provide the OMG excellent operational fires.

Operational fires for the air assault division are limited to its ability to coordinate joint and combined air, land, sea, and space assets. The rapid movement of the division, combined with the long distance traveled, usually results in it out-ranging its supporting artillery. Even with its attack helicopter battalions, and the capability of "lifting" its artillery forward, the division must rely on joint or combined support for operational fires. Consequently, the air assault division will require substantial corps, joint, and combined support to adequately effect operational fires. The advantage in operational fires clearly is with the OMG.

Considering the depth "deep operations" are conducted, operational protection is a key element in maintaining sufficient combat power. As with operational maneuver, the OMG's problem with flank security diminishes its operational protection. Herman Heath's 1989 War College study project summarized the protection problem:

If OMGs or other deep operating forces are quickly subjected to attrition on their flanks and rear, and lines of communication are non-existent, life will be short for the OMG and the cost to the Soviets high. 160

Additionally, Gregory Grist's article highlighted several other operational protection problems. Grist believes that rapid movement of the OMG would cause it to ignore many of the standard communications security precautions. He wrote, "... one of the most critical areas for the OMG is also one of its most vulnerable." He also noted that the greatest responsibility for air defense coverage falls on the OMG's organic assets where a gap develops between the hand-held weapons and the longer range Surface-to-Air (SAM) systems. Operational protection for the OMG is a significant weakness.

Conversely, operational protection for the air assault division is provided in two ways. First the air assault division's speed in employment, the ability to travel great distances in a short time, provides operational security through the element of surprise. Second, the division will be augmented with extensive air defense protection from joint/combined air assets to

overcome limited organic air defense capabilities (27
162
Vulcans and 80 Stinger teams).

As discussed earlier, the question of the helicopter's survivability on the modern battlefield is also a key issue. But as the late General Dr von Senger und Etterlin wrote in his March 1987, RUSI Journal article,

Critics of the helicopter usually concentrate on its vulnerability in combat: it is vulnerable, but hardly more so than other vehicles on the battlefield. It is always surprising that losses of helicopters in their tens are decried while tank losses in the hundreds (some 2000 in the Yom Kippur war) appear acceptable. 163

Briley Howell's study project adds additional insights citing tests which showed tank versus attack helicopter exchange rates higher than 20:1 at ranges over 3000
164
meters. In summary, the DMG has a clear advantage in organic air defense systems, but is vulnerable in operational security. The air assault division, although lacking overwhelming air defense capability, has greater operational security based on its ability to move rapidly.

The inherent nature of operational warfighting, with its inherent emphasis on "deep strikes," will strain command and control systems. The Soviet DMG has undergone numerous changes to improve its command and control capability. Streamlined staff planning procedures, the introduction of automated data processing systems, heliborne command posts, and even satellite

communications are all of major significance. But even with these new innovations in technology and capability, the Soviet's still rely heavily on "carefully worked out plans imposed from above." The modern battlefield, however, requires quick decisions to ensure success - it is a question of "centralized planning versus initiative and flexibility." Soviet actions in Afghanistan highlight this shortcoming.

Soviet officers in the war were required to request permission to deviate from the battle plan. As a result, initiative and agility were virtually eliminated. An interview with a defecting Afgan colonel characterized the Soviet performance as "oversupervised, lacking initiative," and totally reliant on "cookbook warfare" where a checklist was blindly applied to any situation. Operational command and control systems may be adequate for the OMC, but the lack of initiative and agility of the commanders leading the units may hinder its overall effectiveness.

In contrast to the potential "rigidity" of the OMC's C2 system, the air assault division must employ highly mobile and flexible systems to conduct operational level command and control. First and foremost, it requires leaders who have, "the ability to execute quick decisions, and the capacity to fight under decentralized conditions." Initiative is the essential element that gives the subordinate air assault commander the freedom

of action required for operational command and control as
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outlined in FM 100-7. The division relies on mission
oriented orders and the Combat Aviation Management System
(CAMS) to operate over extended distances. CAMS is the
system the division utilizes to control its brigades and
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air assault task forces. This system allows the division
to command and control by emphasizing; a willingness for
leaders to take risks, allowing subordinates initiative
and freedom of action, mutual trust, and an emphasis on
172
the mission rather than the method. In other words,
"Auftragstaktik."

The major advantage of the command and control
system of the air assault division is its employment of a
jump command post (CP). This UH-60 or CH-47 mounted CP
extends the capabilities of the division's assault command
173
post which controls forward operations. Considering its
emphasis on decentralized execution of mission orders,
CAMS, and the employment of the jump-CP, the air assault
division has the advantage over the OMG's ability to
exercise operational command and control.

In either case, though, commanders can neither
command nor control efficiently without accurate and
timely operational intelligence. The OMG's advantage in
operational intelligence comes from the assets at front
and army level. At each level information is collected,
identified, analyzed and then pushed down to the OMG.
The first echelon of the army will employ a forward

detachment which reports directly to the main command post all critical information. Additional information is gathered from SPETSNAZ, artillery and army level air assault forces.¹⁷⁴ This information, combined with the DMG's (tank division's) organic division reconnaissance assets, provides the commander a detailed picture of the area of interest. But, the Soviets also view emerging technologies in long range surveillance, targeting, and fast reacting precision guided weapons systems as hindering their ability to provide operational intelligence. "Reconnaissance-strike-complexes," as Marshal N.V. Ogarkov calls them, act within the Soviet "intelligence-decision-action" cycle.¹⁷⁵ These systems have the potential to disrupt the critical linkage at the operational level of the information flow from front, through the army, to the DMG.

The air assault division requires the supporting corps to provide operational intelligence. Since operational intelligence requires access to information usually only attainable through strategic assets, the division's interface with the corp's Military Intelligence brigade is essential.¹⁷⁶ This brigade, with its operations battalion, tactical exploitation battalion, and aerial exploitation battalion, serves as a conduit for the air assault division's operational intelligence.¹⁷⁷ The success of the air assault division's operational intelligence effort depends in great part on the timeliness and accuracy of the information provided

by the corps. In that regard, the advantage in operational intelligence rests with the OMG.

The elder Moltke's statement, "First consider, then risk," summarizes the criticality of operational support¹⁷⁸ to both the OMG and the air assault division.

Unfortunately, operational support is one of the OMG's major weaknesses. The OMG attempts to conduct operational support through three sources. First, it carries an enormous stockage of supplies internally. Second, it attempts to "live off the land" and exploit captured or abandoned fuel and ammunition stocks. Third,¹⁷⁹ it relies on aerial resupply.

But, D.L. Smith and A.L. Meier's article highlighted the OMG's problem operating, "either with very tight logistics margins or with a large logistics tail," due to¹⁸⁰ the Soviet's problem effecting aerial resupply. The Soviets have expanded their logistics capability; for example, each division has increased the fuel tanker vehicle fleet by 50%. But this has resulted in another problem--a logistics tail of several hundred "soft-skinned"¹⁸¹ vehicles. The need for self-sustainment has caused the size of the force to grow and as a result has slowed the pace of the OMG. A lack of speed may spell disaster for the OMG.

In contrast to the support methodology of the OMG, operational sustainment for the air assault division is accomplished through the combined efforts of "corps throughput, DISCOM and attached motor transport, organic

air, and intra-theater Air Force support." A unique feature of the air assault division is the Temporary Forward Operating Base (TFOB). The TFOB is an area inside enemy controlled or dominated territory that provides security for helicopter laager sites, Forward Arming and Refueling points (FARPs), artillery positions, combat trains, and other logistics support. It is resupplied from the corps directly or through the Division's Support Area (DSA) by helicopter. The TFOB is not an airhead--it is strictly offensive oriented and designed to operate for a maximum of 72 hours. The air assault division can execute operational support if the division's augmentation and corps support structure succeeds.

Once again, the Operational Operating Systems were utilized as the basis of the analysis because they are the Army's methodology for bridging the gap between strategy and tactics. The chart at Appendix 3 summarizes the OMS comparative analysis of the Soviet tank division and the American air assault division by OOS.

Reflecting on operational support as well as the other systems, the question remains: Can the air assault division be employed in the same manner as the OMS? The answer is yes--if the right circumstances are in place that maximize the air assault division's capabilities. The air assault division is adequately organized and employed to maximize its capabilities in operational

movement and maneuver, command and control, and sustainment. But if the air assault division is to be utilized at the operational level of war in the same manner as the OMG, it will require significant augmentation in operational fires, protection, and intelligence. Most importantly, it will require operational commanders who know how to maximize the divisions strengths, minimize its weaknesses, and integrate the division into the campaign plan.

PART VI: CONCLUSION

From its early formation as a Mobile Group to the 1980's version of the OMG, operational warfighting has been an integral part of Soviet doctrine. NATO did not acknowledge the operational level of war until the mid-1980's. C.J. Dick's 1988 article, "Soviet Operational Art Part 1: The Fruits of Experience," credits the lack of operational thinking on "Anglo-Americans" who, "had¹⁸⁴ never experienced land war on the Soviet scale."

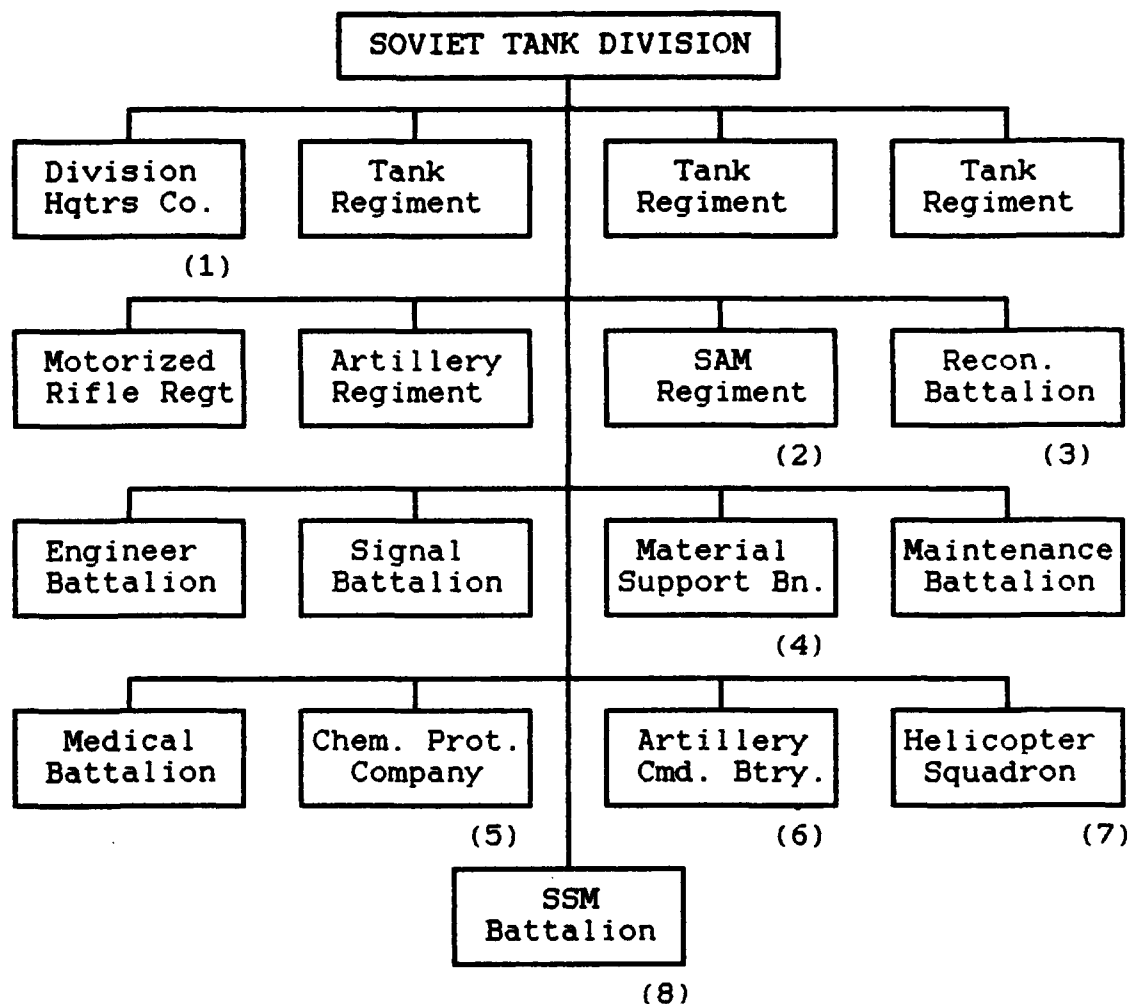
So, U.S. Army operational warfighting is still a relatively new phenomenon. When the U.S. Army adopted AirLand Battle doctrine in 1982, it shifted its focus to¹⁸⁵ the operational level of warfare. Operational art serves as the linkage between the tactical employment of the division and the strategic objectives of echelons above corps. William Hanne believes it provides, "a continuum between the national command authority and the brigade¹⁸⁶ commander."

The air assault division's deep strike capabilities offer the commander an excellent opportunity for the exercise of operational art. To be successful, the commander and staff must fully understand the capabilities and limitations of the air assault force when given an OMG type mission. Employment of the air assault division in this role is a risky endeavor, but even with risk, the commander provides the space and time to win when he creates the opportunities for decisive action. For the air assault division to successfully conduct missions similar to the OMG, it is necessary for the U.S. Army to possess commanders capable of maximizing the division's capabilities. Commanders and planners must be able to see the air assault force's strategic linkage through the application of operational maneuver. Briley Howell's War College Study Project calls for commanders who, at the operational level, "have a better understanding of the potential and limitations that an air assault force may bring to their scheme of maneuver."

In 1645 a Japanese Samurai, Miyamoto Musashi wrote a book entitled, "A Book of Five Rings." In the work he described how a warrior was to use his two swords. The short sword was for close work. The long sword was for "dealing with enemies at full range where there was space for wielding the weapon." On today's modern battlefield, the air assault division can be employed in the same manner as the OMG and function as an operational level

"long sword."

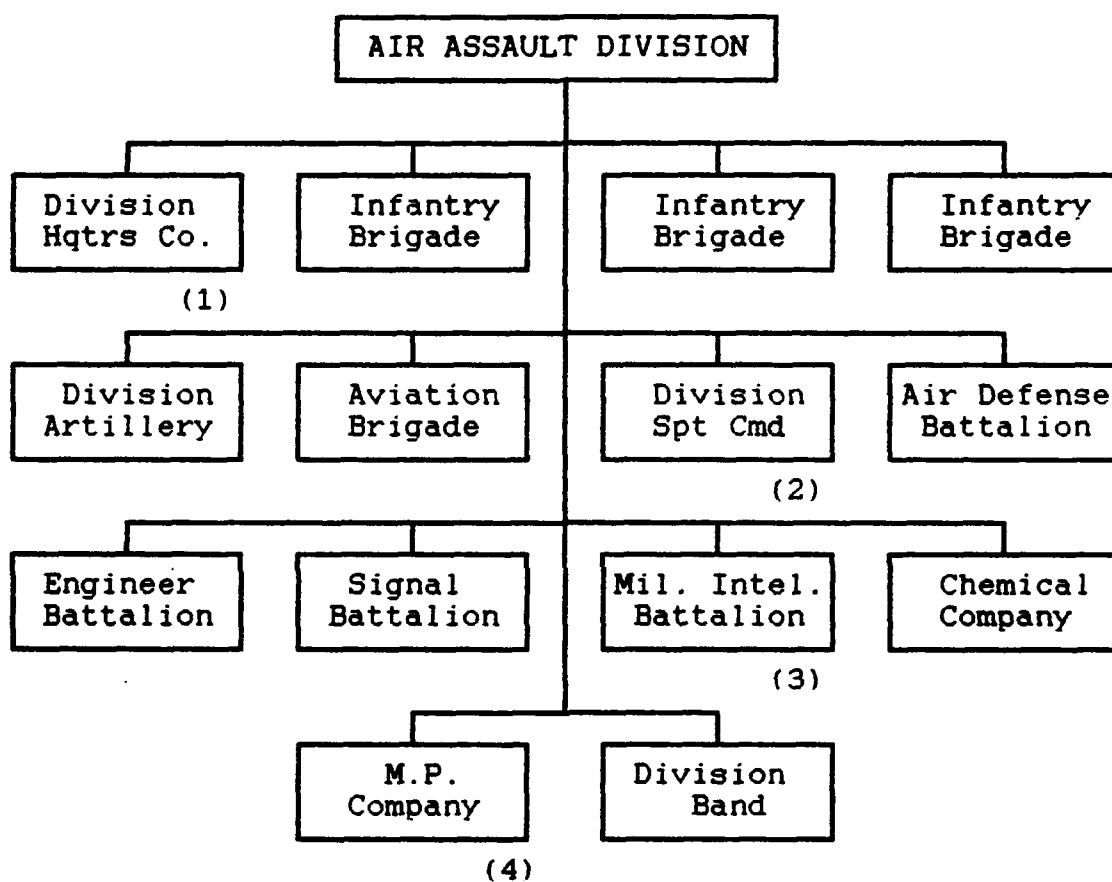
APPENDIX 1:



NOTES:

1. Division Headquarters and Headquarters Company
2. The Tank Division may have a Surface to Air Missile regiment equipped with SA-8 SAM or an AAA regiment equipped with S-60 AA Guns instead of the SA-6 SAM regiment.
3. Reconnaissance Battalion
4. Material Support Battalion
5. Chemical Protection Company
6. Artillery Command Battery
7. Not all divisions have a helicopter squadron.
8. Armies in the Western Group of Forces (WGF) were consolidating division-level Surface to Surface Missile (SSM) battalions into army-level SSM brigades.

APPENDIX 2:



NOTES:

1. Division Headquarters and Headquarters Company
2. Division Support Command
3. Military Intelligence Battalion
4. Military Police Company

Appendix 3:

SUMMARY

COMPARISON BY OPERATIONAL OPERATING SYSTEM

KEY		
(+) = a strength		
(-) = a weakness		
(+/-) = neither a strength nor weakness		
Operational Operating System	Air Assault Division	OMG
Movement and Maneuver	+	+/-
Fires	-	+
Protection	+/-	-
Command and Control	+	+/-
Intelligence	+/-	+
Support	+	-

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